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WHAT DO YOU SEE? EMOTION MAY HELP THE VISUAL SYSTEM JUMP THE GUN TO PREDICT WHAT THE BRAIN WILL SEE

by Jenny Lauren Lee

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"Scientists have long been interested in what role emotions play in recognizing objects …" As researchers look more deeply into the human capacity of visual perception they are finding it's about more than what meets the eye. The components of affect, mood, and emotion appear to influence what people see and don't see.

Science News writer Jenny Lauren Lee explains, "Studies show that the brain guesses the identity of objects before it has finished processing all the sensory information collected by the eyes. And now there is evidence that how you feel may play a part in this guessing game. A number of recent studies show that these two phenomena—the formation of an expectation about what one will see based on context and the visual precedence that emotions give to certain objects—may be related. In fact, they may be inseparable."

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